



Mini-health grants reach out to underserved women

The Indiana State Department of Health's **Office of Women's Health** is reaching out to educate the underserved women of Indiana about the health issues that affect their lives through a program of mini-grants to local health departments. This is the fifth year for the mini-grant program.

Eighteen local health departments will receive up to \$2,000 each to put on half-day health fairs to provide education and awareness on women's health issues, according to Molly Maguire, Office of Women's Health program director.

Indiana ranks fourth in the nation in percentage of female smokers, and falls above the national median for overweight women, lack of physical exercise, fair or poor health status, and diabetes, according to 2000 data from the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS). Women in Indiana also fall below the national median when it comes to having pap smears and mammograms.

Additionally, heart disease, obesity, and



Photo by Daniel Axler

Molly Maguire stands by the Downtown Canal, a great place to walk, jog, or enjoy the ambience.

diabetes are more prevalent in African-American populations, and women of lower incomes (less than \$25,000) report their general health as only fair or poor at higher rates than do women of higher incomes.

"It is very fulfilling to have an impact on the health of women across our state, particularly those underserved. The programs implemented through the

Women's Health Mini-Grant Program have been very successful," Maguire said. "We are able to reach a lot of women to educate and empower them on their health. We estimate that last year 1,500 women were served."

Each participating local health department will target the health issues most prevalent in their county – menopause, osteoporosis, heart disease, nutrition, physical activity, weight management, diabetes and/or smoking. The health fairs, which will be held between October 2003 and April 2004, will combine education and health screenings.

Getting to a health care provider often is a barrier for the underserved, so many of the health fairs will provide transportation, and some health departments will be holding their events in senior citizens centers or low income housing areas.

The Office of Women's Health will provide osteoporosis screenings and the American Heart Association will provide stroke screenings at most of the health fairs.

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"Take a Loved One to the Doctor Day" events planned

It's a baby shower! And the State Department of Health's **Office of Minority Health** is sponsoring the event for 50 expecting couples on Tuesday, September 16, in an effort to promote healthier babies.

The "Shower Your Baby With Love, Baby Shower" at the Indianapolis Urban League is one of two events sponsored by the Office of Minority Health as part of national "Take a Loved One to the Doctor Day," said Tasha Smith-Bonds, Office of Minority Health program coordinator.

The focus of "Take a Loved One to the Doctor Day" is to encourage individuals to take charge of their health by visiting a health professional, making an appointment for a visit, attending a health event, or helping a friend, neighbor, or family member do the same. Governor Frank O'Bannon has proclaimed September 16 as "Indiana Take a Loved One to the Doctor Day."

At the baby shower, the couples will not only be showered with gifts, they'll

also be showered with education.

The baby shower will offer the expecting parents valuable information on prenatal care, newborn screenings, breastfeeding, immunizations, and other health issues to help ensure the successful development of their children, both before and after pregnancy.

Weilin Long of ISDH's **Newborn Screening Program** will talk to the expecting moms and dads about the blood screenings for newborns that could show sickle cell anemia or other genetic diseases and the importance of follow-up exams, if indicated.

The soon-to-be moms and dads will learn how to put baby to bed safely to avoid Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) in a presentation by Barb Himes of the Indiana Peri-Natal Network's SIDS program. One lucky couple will even win a baby bed courtesy of the SIDS program.

The expecting parents will be shown how easily a newborn can be injured and how to avoid Shaken Death Syndrome.

The Marion County Health Department's lead and nutrition program will conduct a breastfeeding seminar. Clarian Health Network will focus on car seat safety and give away a safety car seat. In addition, Marion County will give each couple coupons that can be used at its

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"This is a sad week, indeed, for the state of Indiana. We are all deeply concerned about Governor O'Bannon, and our thoughts and prayers go out to him and his family. In the difficult weeks to come, I believe our best show of support for the Governor, First Lady Judy O'Bannon, and their family, is to continue to carry out the important work we do here every day."

State Health Commissioner
Greg Wilson, M.D.

MINI-GRANTS: Tamales are out; steamed vegetables are in

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Each health fair will be unique, with its own format and set of speakers, seminars, educational materials, and screenings. Health fairs may include gynecological exams with pap smears, and screenings and/or tests for cholesterol, glucose, blood pressure, body mass index, grip strength, pulmonary function, and vision.

The DeKalb County Health Department will give pedometers to 30 participants to be used in a follow-up walking program.

These local health departments also are encouraged to collaborate and partner with other agencies or non-profits.

The Elkhart County Health Department is partnering with the Hispanic/Latino Health Coalition of Elkhart County to target the often overlooked Latino/Hispanic population. Maria Diaz, director of the coalition, said the health fair's theme is "Su salud refeja su felicidad" (Your health is reflected in your happiness).

"The Hispanic/Latino population needs a lot of information," Diaz said. "We have

the resources to help them, but they don't know where to go."

There will be translators and interpreters, as well as baby sitters, at the Elkhart health fair, which is scheduled for April 2004. Bertha Ramos, M.D. of the Hispanic/Latino Coalition will speak on diabetes and nutrition, two areas that especially affect the Latino population.

Diaz noted that Latino women need to retool their food habits from lard-based cooking to the use of more healthful oils. Tamales are out (except occasionally), she said, and steamed vegetables are in.

"They need to learn to make modifications," she said, "and teach their children healthy eating habits."

The Knox County Health Department, Vincennes University, and Good Samaritan Hospital will partner for a full-day "Women's Retreat." This event will include nine free screenings and reduced rates on screenings done that day at the hospital. There also will be a continental breakfast, lunch and a style show, shoulder and neck massages, speakers, workshops, and goodie bags full of gifts.

The cost for the retreat is \$15, or \$25 for two. With the mini-grant funds, the health fair will be able to offer fee waivers to low-income women, said Gazella Summitt, director of human resources at Vincennes University and chairwoman of the retreat. Summitt has contacted the Knox County and Vincennes housing authorities, Harbor House Domestic Violence Center, and a program for older and returning students at Vincennes University to help identify women for waivers.

The mini-grant funds also will help pay for speakers. Topics will range from "All Stressed Up and Nowhere to Go," "Mingling Made Easy," and "They Took My Hormone Replacement, Now What Do I Do?"

Health fair organizers expect about 400 women to attend the Oct. 25, 2003, event at Vincennes' Executive Inn Hotel.

Maguire said that without the mini-grants, many counties would not be able to hold health fairs.

"It's nice to be able to help, especially in this time of limited funds," she said.

Local Health Departments and collaborating organizations receiving grants for 2003-2004

ALLEN COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT/HEALTH VISIONS OF FT. WAYNE

"Mothers and Daughters: Generations of Health"

BROWN COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

"BABE: Be Active, Be Enlightened"

CLINTON COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

"WOW! Women's Opportunity for Wellness"

DEKALB COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

"Hand in Hand to Keep Homemakers Healthy"

CITY OF EAST CHICAGO HEALTH DEPARTMENT

"Come As You Are, Be All That You Can Be"

**ELKHART COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT/
HISPANIC/LATINO HEALTH COALITION OF ELKHART CO.,
INC.**

"Su salud refeja su felicidad" (Your health is reflected in your happiness)

GRANT COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

"Women's Expo 2003"

**HARRISON COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT/HARRISON
COUNTY HOSPITAL**

"Healthy Lifestyles for Women"

JENNINGS COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

"Take It To Heart"

**KNOX COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT/VINCENNES
UNIVERSITY/GOOD SAMARITAN HOSPITAL**
Women's Health Retreat

MARION COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT
"Boning Up!"

MONROE COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT
"Learning to Live: Women's Health Workshop"

MONTGOMERY COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT
"Focus on Women's Health"

**OWEN COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT/OWEN COUNTY
FAMILY YMCA**
"Women's Health Fair"

**PARKE COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT/FAMILY HEALTH
AND HELP CENTER**
Park County Women's Health Awareness Seminar

PUTNAM COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT
"Contributing Factors of Osteoporosis"

ST. JOSEPH COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT
"2nd Annual WISH Conference"

SWITZERLAND COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT
"For Women Only"

It's time to reach for the STARS

The deadline is drawing near to nominate a fellow employee for a **STAR** Award, the State Department of Health's twice-yearly recognition for doing one's job above and beyond the norm.

Nomination deadline for the Fall STAR Awards is Friday, September 12.

Employees may nominate co-workers who have excelled in **S**ervice, **T**eamwork, **A**ttitude, and **R**espect.

There are three categories for the STAR Awards:

- Support (COMOT) and Labor, Trades and Crafts staff;
- Professional, Administrative, and Technological (PAT) staff;
- Supervisor/Management/Executive staff.

The Employee Recognition Committee, which is taking the nominations, asks that employees nominate only one employee for each category. One STAR winner will be selected from each of the three groups.

To qualify for a STAR Award, an employee "has provided dedicated and extraordinary service to a citizen, agency, fellow co-worker, or another state employee."

The nomination form asks for specific examples of how the nominee has demonstrated exceptional performance in Service, Teamwork, Attitude, and Respect.

Other supporting information about the nominee may be included in the nomination.

Nomination forms were e-mailed to employees on August 25 by Lisa Hensley of the Employee Recognition Committee. The nomination form is also posted on the Forms Page of the ISDH Intranet.

Please send your nomination to Joe Shierling, STAR Nominations, Information Technology Services – 3E, by Friday, September 12.

Winners will be notified shortly after the committee meets to select the top employees. Dates have not yet been set.

Traditionally, each winner is presented a STAR Award plaque and a desk pen holder and pen by the State Health Commissioner. A framed photo of the award ceremony, which is held in the commissioner's office, is hung in the employee snack bar, and a story about each employee is featured in the *Express*.



Photos by Daniel Axler

Winter 2002 - 2003 STAR Award winners are congratulated by State Health Commissioner Greg Wilson, M.D. From top are: Mary Hawn, Jim Howell, and Gerald Seifert.

LOVED ONE: Health presentation to focus on chronic health issues

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Beds and Britches, Etc. (B.A.B.E.) store towards the purchase of items from baby clothing to strollers.

The ISDH **Oral Health Division** will donate toothbrushes – for the time baby develops those first teeth.

Moms and dads also will get toothbrushes.

Raphael Center will give away "goody bags" with pacifiers, medicine droppers, diapers, a rattle, baby wipes, laundry detergent, toiletry items, and coupons that can be used at local retailers. The March of Dimes; the Indiana Family Health Council; the Blackburn Health Center; Women, Infants and Children (WIC) program; and the ISDH immunization program also will provide healthy baby information.

The second event will be a health presentation at Indianapolis' Martin Luther King Center. Danielle Patterson, director of the Office of Minority Health, said the goal is to "close the health gap and address the health disparities among minorities."

The free event will focus on chronic health issues such as arthritis, cancer, osteoporosis, cardiovascular disease, diabetes, and kidney disease for men and women over age 45.

The National Kidney Foundation will offer free blood pressure screenings; Prevent Blindness will give free glaucoma and visual acuity screenings; and ISDH's Office of Women's Health will provide free osteoporosis screenings. Patterson said participants can also sign up for free or low cost mammograms, pap smears, and prostate specific antigen tests.

Barb Levy Tobey, director of the Office of Women's Health, will talk about chronic health issues for women over 45, and Tisha Reed of the Little Red Door Cancer Agency will talk about prostate cancer.

The Minority Health Coalition of Marion County will offer free health examinations at Martindale-Brightwood Health Center, Southeast Health Center, and the Raphael Center.

"This is a great opportunity to help those without access to health care, to introduce them to the health care system, find out their needs, and to help address those needs," Patterson said. "In order for us to close the health gap, we must educate people on the issues that are affecting them."

Additional "Take a Loved One to the Doctor Day" activities include:

- ✓ Minority Health Coalition of Elkhart County: Health screenings, 2 to 6 p.m., VFW Post, 1318 6th Street, Elkhart
- ✓ Memorial Hospital of South Bend, Office of Minority Health: Community Health Fair, 4 to 7 p.m., Mary Crest Building and parking lot, Memorial Neighborhood, 2015 Western Avenue, South Bend
- ✓ Brothers United, Indianapolis: Free transportation to the doctor for those in need
- ✓ Minority Health Coalition of Marion County: Free physicals and screenings in collaboration with area community Health Net Centers
- ✓ Indiana Minority Health Coalition: Collaborating with a variety of local organizations for screenings and information; free physicals at Martindale-Brightwood Health Center, 2855 N. Keystone Ave., Southeast Health Center, 901 S. Shelby Street, and Raphael Center, 401 E. 34th Street, 1 to 4 p.m.

No cigarettes wanted in this galaxy

In a galaxy far, far away no children smoke.

And no children smoking in this galaxy, either, is what the Montgomery County Health Department is trying to promote through its association with Tar Wars, a national tobacco-free education program. For several years, the health department has presented the Tar Wars

program and poster contest to all Montgomery County 5th graders. Students got certificates for participating.

This year, with the help of about \$10,000 of the county's tobacco settlement money, the health department was able to give Tar Wars T-shirts to all 5th graders who participated in the poster contest. Winners from each of the 10 Montgomery County elementary schools received \$50



Billboards of the winning Tar Wars posters and student photos were placed near the winners' schools.

savings bonds. The winning poster and a photo of the student from each of the three school districts was turned into a highway billboard and placed near the winner's school.

Ron Posthauer, Montgomery County Health Department sanitarian, said the added incentives were a plus to the anti-tobacco education program, noting that the more kids learn about the negative

effects of smoking, the more likely they are to develop healthy habits and stay away from tobacco.

"The program definitely creates a lot of awareness about smoking," he said. "And the billboards made instant celebrities of the winners."

Four Athens Medical Group physicians donated their time to present

the Tar Wars education program to the 5th graders. The one-hour presentation included hands-on activities to help the students learn short-term effects of tobacco use, how smoking affects breathing, the financial implications of tobacco use, reasons why people smoke, and how advertisers try to lure youth to smoking.

After the education program, the students were invited to participate in the nation-wide poster contest. Through the contest, the students could express what they had learned and promote the positive benefits of not smoking to their peers.

A total of 295 Montgomery County 5th graders participated in the poster contest. Athens Medical Group and the Montgomery County A.H.E.A.D. Coalition, a drug abuse education organization, partnered with the Montgomery County Health Department to promote Tar Wars.

Posthauer said it was evident from the posters the kids drew that they had learned important facts about smoking and not smoking.

Employees recognized for 35 years of service

State government employees were honored for their 35 years of service at a reception on Monday, August 25, in the Capitol Rotunda. Four employees from the State Department of Health were recognized for their years of service. Unable to attend the reception were Reba Koch Stuckey, retired Microbiology Lab supervisor, and Elizabeth Arvella Baker, retired residential mentor, at Indiana Soldiers' and Sailors' Children's Home.



Darlene Hopper, program coordinator for the X-ray operators program in the Indoor and Radiologic Health Program, is shown with Deputy Health Commissioner Liz Carroll and Governor Frank O'Bannon.



John Wittkamper, teacher at Indiana Soldiers' and Sailors' Children's Home, is shown with Deputy Health Commissioner Liz Carroll, Governor Frank O'Bannon, and Children's Home Superintendent Paul Wilkinson.

Photos by Daniel Axler



Express

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